

A helpful glossary of terms used by the legal profession

Legal language can sometimes be confusing. To make it just that little bit easier, here is a list of the more common terms you are likely to come across.

Term	Definition
Administrator	The person appointed by the court to administer your affairs if you do not leave a Will.
Assets	All your money, goods, and possessions.
Beneficiary	Any person or organisation named in your Will who will receive a legacy or bequest (gift).
Bequeath	To leave something in your Will.
Codicil	An additional document to your existing Will, making a simple change. It must also be drawn up legally and be witnessed.
Conditional Legacy	A gift that will only take effect if a certain event occurs.
Crown	The official term for where your money goes if you die without leaving a Will and without any next of kin. In practice, this means the HMRC.
Estate	The total sum of your possessions, property, and money (minus debts) left after your death.
Executor (male) Executrix (female)	Someone you appoint to carry out the instructions in your Will. Executors are usually family, friends, or professional advisors.
Intestate	Dying without having made a Will.
Inheritance Tax	A tax charged if the value of your Estate is above a certain limit.
Legacy	A bequest or gift left in your Will. It can be in the form of money, property, stocks and shares or possessions.
Pecuniary Bequest	A gift of a fixed sum of money in your Will.
Pledge	To promise a gift (not legally binding).
Probate	The legal procedure after death, which confirms your Will is valid and confirms the executors' authority to carry out your wishes.
Residue	The remainder of your Estate after all the debts have been paid and all your pecuniary and specific bequests have been made.
Residuary Bequest	A gift of the remainder of your Estate after all other bequests have been made and debts cleared.
Restricted Fund	Monies or property required to be held for a specific project or cause, rather than for the general funds of a charity.